

Message Text

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SUBJECT: EDITORIAL COMMENT ON GOC HANDLING OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS STRIKE

REF: OTTAWA 2658

FOLLOWING ARE THE EDITORIAL COLUMNS WHICH WERE RUN ON TUESDAY 29 JUNE 1976 BY TORONTO SUN AND THE TORONTO STAR AS COMMENTARY ON THE SETTLING OF THE GOC HANDLING OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS STRIKE TORONTO SUN OF 29 JUNE 1976

PILOTS WIN?

"IT LOOKS AS IF AIRLINE PILOTS (AND AIR CONTROLLERS) HAVE ACHIEVED IN NINE DAYS OF STRIKE WHAT THE COMBINED OPPOSITION HAS FAILED TO DO IN EIGHT YEARS OF TRUDEAU'S ONEMAN RULE--THEY'VE MADE THE GOVERNMENT BACK UP, IF NOT BACK DOWN.

TO GET PLANES FLYING AGAIN TRUDEAU HAD TO EXPAND THE COMMISSION INVESTIGATING THE SAFETY OF BILINGUALISM IN AIR TRAFFIC TO INCLUDE AADGE D.V. HEALD, A ROSS THATCHER LIBERAL AND A VETERAN OF FOUR WARTIME YEARS WITH THE RCAF. HE'S ACCEPTABLE TO PILOTS WHILE THE OTHER TWO ALONE ON THE COMMISSION WERE NOT. THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS HAVE TO BE UNANIMOUS AND WILL BE SUBJECTED TO A "FREE VOTE" UNCLASSIFIED

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IN PARLIAMENT (WHICH IS A JOKE WHEN ONE THINKS OF THE MANIPULATED, PRESSURED VOTE ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT).

TO TOP IT OFF IF PILOTS DON'T AGREE WITH THE REPORT, THEY WILL SUBMIT ONE OF THEIR OWN AND THE ISSUE WILL BE BACK TO

SQYARE ONE. AS PILOTS PUT IT SO SUCCINCTLY: BILINGUALISM IN THE AIR IS 'NOT NECESSARILY UNSAFE--BUT LESS SAFE'. EXACTLY. IF WE ACCEPT SECOND-BEST FOR CANADA, WHEN ENGLISH-ONLY IS THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE OF THE AIR, USED BY MOST COUNTRIES REGARDLESS OF THEIR MOTHER TONGUE, WELL, WE ARE DUMB. THANK GOODNESS PILOTS HAVE PRIORITY REIGHT' THE TRUDEAU GOVERNMENT HASN'T BEEN HONEST. BARNEY DANSON, FOR ONE, HAS FUNED AT 'CANADIAN' BIGOTS AND REDNECKS WHOM HE SAYS ARE EXPLOITING ANTI-FRENCH PREJUDICE.THIS IS THE SAME BARNEY DANSON WHO GROVELLED AND TRIED TO APPEASE UN CUTTHROATS AND RACISTS AT THE RECENT HABITAT CONFERENCE IN VANCOUVER. BOTH UNSEEMLY DISPLAYS. TRUDEAU HAS TRIED DIVERSIONARY STUNTS BY SHOUTING RACIST ACCUSATIONS AT AN AD THAT APPEARED WHEN THE GOVERNMENT'S ADD APPEARED IN PAPERS. AND SOME ELEMENTS IN THE MEDIA HAVE UNCRITICALLY ECHOED THE LINE, RIGHTEOUSLY SCOLDING WHAT THEY'S BEEN TOLD IS INCIPIENT RACISM. TWITS. THE ONLY ISSUE IS AIR SAFETY. AND PILOTS DESERVE PRAISE FOR HANDLING THE DICEY ISSUE RESPONSIBLE, COOLLY, PROFESSIONALLY. WISH THE TORY OPPOSITION WERE AS COMPETENT..."

TORONTO STAR OF 29 JUNE 1976

AIR SAFETY WON AT A HIGH PRICE
"FROM THE STANDPOINT OF AIR SAFETY ALONE, THE AGREEMENT WRESTED FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BY THE PILOTS' STRIKE MAKES CLEAR THAT BILINGUALISM WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO DETRACT FROM THE SAFETY OF AIR TRAVEL IN CANADA.
THIS WILL NOT BE A MATTER OF PARTY POLITICS, BUT OF THE FINDINGS OF A COMMISSION OF THREE JUDGES, WHOSE RECOMMENDATIONS WILL THEN BE PUT TO A FREE VOTE IN PARLIAMENT.
HOWEVER, THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMISSION MAKE SUCH CONCESSIONSTO THE PILOTS AND THEIR ALLIES, THE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS THE RIGHT TO DISSENT, NOT MATTER WHAT THE COMMISSION CONCLUDES,AND THER IS A GOOD CHANCE THEY MAY DO JUST THAT.

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NONETHELESS, CANADAINS WHO FLY CAN BE CONFIDENT THAT NEITHER THE COMMISSION NOR THE MPS WILL PUT BILLINGUALISM POLICY AHEADOF AIR SAFETY.
THE GVVERNMENT MUST BEAR MUCH OF THE BLAME FOR ALLOWING THIS NASTY DISPUTE TO ESCALATE TO THE NATIONAL CRISIS. THE GOVERMENT KNEW THERE WAS WIDESPREAD OPPOSITION BUT ALLOWED THE ISSUE TO SIMMER. TRANSPORT MINISTER OTTO LANG, IN PARTICULAR, APPEARD INSENSITIVE NOT ONLY TO THE CONERN OVER SAFETY BUT ALSO TO THE WIDER POLITICAL EXPLOSIVENESS OF THE ISSUE. IN THE PROCESS, MUCH DAMAGE WAS DONE TO THE CAUSE OF BILINGUALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY--DAMAGE THAT WILL TAKE A LONG TIME TO REPAIR.
THE MEANS BY WHICH THE ISSUE WAS DECIDED MUST ALSO CAUSE CONCERN

TO THOUGHTFUL CANADAINS. A POWERFUL GROUP, ACTING ILLEGALLY,
HAS BEEN ABLE TO IMPOSE ITS WILL ON THE GOVERNMENT ELECTED BY THE
PEOPLE.

THE FACT THAT IN THIS CASE THE GROUP'S CAUSE WAS POPULAR IN MOST
OF THE COUNTRY, AND THAT ITS AIM OF AIR SAFETY IS BEYOND

CRITICISM, DOES NOT ALTER THE BROAD AND OMINOUS IMPLICATION OF
ITS ACTION.

IF PILOTS CAN BEND THE GOVERNMENT TO THEIR WILL, THEN THEIR
POWERFUL GROUPS MAY FOLLOW THAT PRECEDENT FOR THEIR OWN
PURPOSES--WHICH MAY BE MUCH LESS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST THAN AIR
SAFETY IS.

TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY SUCCEED, CANADA WILL NOT HAVE REPRESENTA-
TIVE GOVERNMENT ANY MORE: WE WILL HAVE GOVERNMENT BY SPECIAL-
INTEREST GROUPS THAT ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE TO THE VOTERS.

TO TAKE A HYPOTHETICAL INSTANCE, RAILWAY UNIONS MIGHT SHUT DOWN
THE NATION'S RAILWAY TRANSPORTATION TO PROTEST A PAY DECISION OF THE
ANTI-INFLATION BOARD, AND IN EFFECT AGAINST WAGE CONTROLS GENERALLY.

WOULD THE GOVERNMENT THEN PROMISE A FREE VOTE IN PARLIAMENT ON
WAGE CONTROLS, TO GET RAILWAY WORKERS BACK ON THEIR JOBS?

IT WOULDN'T TAKE MANY SUCH CASES TO SHATTER DEMOCRATIC,
RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT IN CANADA. DEMOCRACY WOULD GIVE WAY TO A
CHAOTIC SITUATION IN WHICH VARIOUS POWERFUL INTERESTS WOULD GET
THEIR WAY, FOLLOWED PROBABLY BY SOME KIND OF AUTHORITARIAN RULE
TO RESTORE ORDER.

SAFETY IN THE AIR IS IMPORTANT, AND IT WILL BE SERVED.

EVEN MORE IMPORTANT ARE THE SAFETY OF DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM
UNDER LAW. HOW NOW WILL THEY BE SERVED?"

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THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE VERBIAGE, MOSTLY NEGATIVE,
IN BOTH TORONTO NEWSPAPERS ON SETTLEMENT OF THE STRIKE. CLIPPINGS
OF EDITORIAL COMMENT BEING SENT UNDER COVER OF TORONTO A-71.
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